HF, HR, PH, 3/2/72

After I got to reading Khruschev Remembers I suggested that if you do not have it you should get it, for an assortment of reasons, one being that if you accept it as legit. and even if you believe Oswald was a believer when he went to the USSR, it can make understandable what I have always believed, that regardless of what he was when he went (and I lean to the view he was anti), he could very well have come back anti-Soviet.

I have lamost finished the last item in the appendix, the Kh. Speech to the 20th Congress on which the CIA pulled quite a coup, getting it if it is the real thing and getting it accepted if it is not.

I could make out a case that the book is a manufacture. There are things not in it I can't imagine Kh. having left out. However, I believe it is probably genuine and a few of our boys took care of the few things I spotted. I have not studied this book, I have merely read it. Sometimes, like this p.m., when I was pretty tired. (We're in out third of fourth day of 75 plus weather, and I worked outside a.m. and p.m. I also left to get Lil early so I'd not be tempted to work more, feeling that after a winter of inactivity this was enough. I read it while waiting for her.)

Whether or not you get the book, and I think Mary and Arch will find it quite comforting, if you see anything the authenticity of which appeals to you bearing on whether or not it is legit, I'd like to see or have it.

I recall a friend who had gotten the official transcripts of the purge trials coming to my apt. one night and reading the "testimony" of the accused Arnold (I think), a chauffeur. We split out sides laughing. The rest I can't remember. And I have had my own experience with Soviet ethics, so I can credit much that Kh says. Let me give you a couple of things that come to mind from my magazine correspondent days (I was that in wash for what was only the third largest picture magazine). I got all the governments' handouts, and once I spotted what would have made a great story. You can see the clarity of my recall from the details, which include the name. There was a girl whose name was given as Ludmilla Pavlichenko who had killed some 200 Nazis as a sniper. So, I asked for a first person account of how it feels to be a girl(pretty, too, from the pix) sniper, how she got such skill, how it feels for the fair sex to kill, etc. I was told it would present some problems, but they'd see. Next thing I knew they had fed it to Scripps-Howard, which then had some 20 papers and United Press. I also asked for a first-person story by Litvinoff's wife. He was then amb. and she was English. Impossible. For just a couple of weeks, when exactly what I had laid out as what I'd like appeared in LIFE. And I was asked to get some maps of the USSR to illuminate a story Walter Durante, a famous correspondent of that and especially the earlier period, had written. Impossible! Maps are military secrets. So, I went to the Department of Commerce and they loaned me rare copies of bound maps and I took them home and traced off what we wanted. The art staff then made a great map, complete with the location of major industries and raw materials, etc., not a secret at all. Even the Chinese Embassy would lend me such things in those days, but the USSR was uptight.

So, I do not really have any doubt about the basic authenticity of this book. There are "obeisances", like Kh. condemning others for over-drinking and making no mention of his own scandalous behavior in Belgrade.

Among the parts I do not trust are those dealing with the Cub Missle crisis. I have made enough of a study of that to know it is wrong in serious ways and to doubt that some of the things happened and to be certain the chronology is in error. There is much too little on Asia for me not to wonder about that. And there are, to me, other serious defects. Nonetheless, I think that what it says elsewhere is essentially the truth. Which doesn't eliminate the possibility that it is a construction of our spooks. Crankshaw is a partisan, and having him edit and annotate was a mistake, for he does not reduce credibility of allegations of flunky and some of his notations are suspect. They are also selective.

Meanwhile, you know my special interest. Best, HW